



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
DARRELL V. MCGRAW, JR.
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
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Press Release

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL DARRELL MCGRAW WILL DISTRIBUTE OVER
\$140,000 IN REFUNDS TO CONSUMERS FROM SETTLEMENT
OF BARTOLO FUNERAL HOME LAWSUIT**

Attorney General Darrell McGraw will visit the Harrison County Courthouse today at 11:00 a.m., to announce the settlement of his lawsuit against Bartolo Funeral Home, Inc. and to distribute refund checks to area consumers.

Last year, Attorney General McGraw's Consumer Protection Division received complaints against Bartolo Funeral Home, alleging that Bartolo was closing for business without returning money paid in advance by consumers for preneed funeral expenses. The Consumer Protection Division investigated and found that the funds given to Bartolo Funeral Home for preneed contracts had been used for other purposes, in violation of the law.

During the course of the investigation it was also revealed that Bartolo had supplied fictitious accounting records of the preneed funds. The preneed funds had been misappropriated and were therefore not available either for refunds to consumers or for payment to other funeral homes for burials when the time came.

On behalf of consumers who had lost money to Bartolo Funeral Home, Attorney General McGraw filed suit in the matter of State ex rel. McGraw, Attorney General v. James F. Bartolo and Bartolo Funeral Home, Inc. in the Circuit Court of Harrison County, to freeze the available assets of Bartolo Funeral Home for the reimbursement of defrauded consumers. Pursuant to the terms of a Confession of Judgment, Bartolo will reimburse \$234,000 to consumers. Bartolo will surrender certain property and funds for an initial payment and repay the remainder owed in installments. Bartolo further agreed to permanently refrain from accepting any advance payments for funeral expenses.

Because of the financial terms of the agreement and the limited remaining resources of Bartolo Funeral Home, most of the refunds being paid to Harrison County consumers today will come from the "Preneed Guarantee Fund," a special victims' fund set up by Attorney General McGraw's office to take care of victims of preneed funeral fraud.

Any customer of Bartolo Funeral Home suspecting that their prepayments may have been mishandled should contact the Attorney General's Consumer Hotline, at 800-368-8808, or 304-558-8986.

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